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Promotion and protection of human rights

Letter dated 5 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, in the light of the celebration by the international community of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in support of your message dedicated to the Human Rights Day, His Excellency Mr. Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, signed a special decree on 1 May 2008 (see annex).

The decree highlights major achievements by the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of protection and promotion of human rights and approves the programme of activities devoted to the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I would appreciate if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, under its agenda item 70.

(*Signed*) Alisher **Vohidov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan

08-35864 (E) 020608 030608

Annex to the letter dated 5 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Programme of activities devoted to the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

In 2008 the international community is celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which laid down the main democratic principles and requirements for the observance of human rights and freedoms and created a political and legal framework for the establishment of an entire system of international law in this sphere.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the first international legal instrument to which the Republic of Uzbekistan acceded after gaining independence. Having chosen a path of building a democratic and law-based State and a strong civil society, Uzbekistan has identified human rights and interests as the most important priority of social development and nation building, and of its entire domestic and foreign policy.

Over the years of independence, our country has acceded to 60 basic human rights instruments and has become a party to 6 basic international human rights agreements adopted by the United Nations.

The provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have been embodied in articles of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and of national legislation, ensuring the reliable protection of the political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms of all people.

Through ongoing market reforms and the implementation of large-scale State social programmes such as "Healthy generation", "Mother and child", "Year of health", "Year of the family", "Year of social welfare", "Year of youth" and others, all the necessary conditions have been created for the comprehensive protection of the social and economic rights of all people and, above all, of children, women and youth, and their all-round, harmonious development.

Mechanisms for the protection of the political rights and freedoms of citizens have been created and are operating effectively. There are more than 5,000 non-governmental, non-profit organizations in Uzbekistan. The role of political parties in social and national development has significantly increased. Independent media and other civil society institutions are flourishing and have become a powerful factor in enhancing the political and social engagement of the population and in democratic renewal and modernization of the country.

The steady process of liberalization of the legal and judicial system has become an important guarantee of the observance of human rights. The classification of crimes has been completely overhauled and the list of serious crimes has been significantly reduced.

As a result, the number of persons sentenced to imprisonment in 2007 fell by more than half compared with 2000. There are 138 prison inmates for every 100,000 members of the population; this number is significantly lower than in the most developed countries of the world.

Measures to ensure the independence of the judiciary and increase the effectiveness of the judicial protection of citizens' rights are being implemented step by step. The courts are now specialized in criminal, civil or economic areas, and appeal and mediation bodies have been established. Measures to ensure equal rights for prosecutors and defence lawyers are also being put into effect.

The abolition of the death penalty in Uzbekistan as of January 2008 was an important step in ensuring the reliable protection of human rights, along with the transfer to the courts of the right to issue arrest warrants.

A system of national human rights institutions has been established and is actively operating in the country; these include the authorized representative for human rights (ombudsman) of the *Oliy Majlis*, the national centre for human rights, the institute for monitoring current legislation and also specially established human rights protection departments in the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Prosecutor-General and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

A system of continuous education and awareness-building in the field of human rights has been established. More than 20 specialized magazines and newspapers on human rights protection are published in Uzbekistan in thousands of copies. The legislative basis of human rights protection is being studied at all schools, colleges and lyceums as well as higher educational institutions.

Uzbekistan is consistently and strictly fulfilling its international obligations in the sphere of human rights and regularly submits its periodic national reports on these issues to the relevant United Nations treaty bodies. Government agencies, civil society institutions, self-government bodies, the media and the general public are involved in the implementation of their recommendations.

Supporting the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the occasion of Human Rights Day and with the goal of further improving the system of organizational, legal and legislative measures aimed at ensuring the reliable protection of human rights and freedoms:

1. The programme of activities devoted to the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is hereby approved. Government organizations and agencies, public associations and the media are expected to participate actively in the events devoted to the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the most important international legal instrument embodying democratic values and the ideals of human development.

2. The composition of the Special Commission for the implementation of the programme of activities devoted to the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is hereby approved.

The main tasks of the Special Commission shall be as follows:

– Coordinating the work of State bodies and institutions, self-government bodies, civil society institutions and the media in carrying out the activities set

forth in the programme of activities devoted to the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

– Organizing broad media coverage of the events devoted to the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the extensive work being carried out in Uzbekistan to strengthen democratic, social, economic and political reforms, the ultimate goal and the prerequisite being the individual and his or her rights and freedoms;

– Ensuring close interaction with international organizations, in the first place United Nations bodies, through the active participation of representatives of Uzbekistan at international events devoted to the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

3. The legislative chamber and senate of the *Oliy Majlis* and the Cabinet of Ministers shall carry out in 2008-2009 measures for the preparation and consideration of draft legislation aimed at further improving the legal and regulatory basis for the protection of political, social and economic rights and freedoms of citizens and also ensuring the unconditional implementation of legislation adopted in this sphere.

4. The Ministry of Justice, in conjunction with the Office of the Prosecutor-General, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, the *Ma'naviyat va Ma'rifat* (Centre for spirituality and enlightenment) of the *Kengash* (Council) shall ensure throughout 2008 the publication and broad dissemination among the population of series of brochures, textbooks and socio-political materials explaining the main provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the foundations of national legislation in the sphere of the protection of the political, social, economic and cultural rights and interests of citizens.

5. The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education and the Ministry of Public Education, along with the youth public movement *Kamolot* shall:

– Organize on a systematic basis, with the involvement of leading experts and scientists, round tables, seminars and lectures for in-depth study at educational institutions and among the youth of Uzbekistan of State policy on ensuring the protection of human rights and interests, creating the social, economic and political conditions necessary for all-round human development and the active participation of young people in building a new society and ensuring the security and prosperity of the homeland;

– On 10 December 2008, hold a nationwide class at all schools, lyceums, colleges and higher educational institutions devoted to the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

6. The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education shall ensure the incorporation into the curricula of higher educational institutions which provide training and refresher training for journalists of special training programmes for the study of domestic and international experience of the involvement of the media in the protection of human rights in the light of the requirements of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

7. The civil society studies institute, in conjunction with the institute for the monitoring of current legislation of the President of the Republic, the authorized

representative for human rights (ombudsman) of the *Oliy Majlis* and the national centre for human rights shall within three months conduct a critical analysis of the work of the human rights protection departments in the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Prosecutor-General and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and make proposals on measures to further enhance their effectiveness.

8. The Cabinet of Ministers shall elaborate within one month and implement in 2008 a package of measures for the provision of state support to the work of the national human rights institutions, the strengthening of the material and technical base and the creation of the necessary conditions for the effective work of the branches of the authorized representative for human rights (ombudsman) of the *Oliy Majlis*, the national centre for human rights and other institutions.

9. Taking into account the communication from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall allocate an amount of US$ 100,000 as a voluntary contribution of Uzbekistan to the special fund of OHCHR in order to support United Nations efforts for the practical implementation of the main goals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

10. The Uzbek press and information agency, the national television and radio company, the Uzbekistan national information agency and the media shall produce thematic programmes and publications providing comprehensive coverage of the implementation of the programme of activities devoted to the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

11. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoev, shall be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Decree.

Islam Karimov
President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Tashkent, 1 May 2008